

Dear Honorable Judge Castel:

I write you today to tell you how terrible I feel for my actions. I would like to begin by apologizing. I owe an apology to so many: to the officers I harmed, their families, the witnesses to my crime, to my family, to my community, and lastly to the United States of America. I understand that I have left scars, both physical and mental, on so many people. I wish that I could take back my actions. I'm grateful for the officers' quick thinking and actions to make sure I didn't hurt anyone else that night. Growing up I always wanted to be in law enforcement or go to the military. It really pains me that I hurt the same law enforcement community that I wanted to be a part of and that my family is and has been a part of. I don't know if I can ever show you how sorry I am and how I wish every day that I could go back in time and change what happened.

Knowing that I can't, I've been working since the day of my arrest to try to understand how I did what I did. I've been thinking a lot about my family. On the day I turned 14, my parents separated. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, my father died. The months after my father died were a blur.

As a child I wanted to become a pilot in the military but during this time I lost all hope of making anything of myself. I drank. I smoked. None of that made me feel any less hopeless. I wanted to understand what might happen to my father after he died and I started learning about different religions. I read about Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, and eventually Islam. I didn't know it then, but I was sick. I was hearing voices and noises that weren't there but to me they felt real. Those things that weren't actually real were leading me to go deeper into radical Islam. By the time I attacked the officers, I had become someone else.

I want to be clear that I am not making excuses for the fear and pain that I caused. Nothing could ever justify what I did. I take full responsibility for my terrible crime. After my arrest, when I was in the hospital at Bellevue the doctors gave me an explanation for the voices and thoughts in my head. After I took the medication for a while the voices and noises started to quiet down. That's when I realized they weren't real, it wasn't God or spirits talking to me, because otherwise how could the medications have any effect.

I have been taking medications for more than a year now. It is really helping and I don't see and hear things the way I used to. Even though I get really sad and ashamed some days, I am working hard to better myself. I have challenged my religious beliefs and am no longer Muslim, taken classes, and been tutoring both GED and SENTRY classes.

I have also been looking forward to my future and what it might hold. I hope that I can make a more positive impact in the world for both my victims and myself. I intend to take college courses, though I am undecided on which field of study. I also hope that one day, I could serve as a mental health advocate or school speaker. I understand that I will need to take medication for the rest of my life to manage my illness. I would like to be an example for people to show them that they can get better. While jail has been a difficult place, I have been trying to make things better by helping other people.

Now that I am seeing things more clearly, I have spent time repairing my relationships with my friends and family. One of the most important relationships I have repaired is the relationship I have with my best friend and younger brother [REDACTED]. My actions have severely hurt him, so there was a period where he didn't want to speak with me. But as of early this year, we have gotten back in contact and it means everything to me.

I hope the rest of the world can forgive me like my brother has. But I understand that may not be possible because I caused real and lasting harm to the officers and other people who were in Times Square. I hope that the world feels my remorse and the fact that I will never do this again.

Sincerely,

Trevor Bickford